

What Salespeople can Learn from the Presidential Race

by John Chapin

While the Presidential Race is showing us many qualities of politicians that we *don't* want to emulate such as: bad-mouthing the competition, vacillating on the issues, and bending truths, there are several other qualities that we can emulate to make ourselves super-successful as salespeople. Here they are...

Four qualities of politicians you *do* want to emulate

Put yourself out there

The successful politicians who get their name out and are heard through the noise, are great at putting themselves out there and letting everyone know they are there. They seem to have mastered the primary fear that stops most salespeople: the fear of rejection. The successful politicians don't take things personally and they have thick skin. Insults and other slings and arrows seem to bounce off them or roll off their back. They aren't afraid to speak their minds and they have confidence, conviction, and a healthy impression of themselves. They know that regardless of what others say and think, if they are going to be successful, they have to get out into the world and be seen and heard by as many people as possible.

If you are going to be successful in sales you must demonstrate these same qualities. You must force yourself out into the marketplace each and every day and you must be heard. You must let go of the fear of rejection, embarrassment, or whatever other fears you have by acting in spite of them. You must develop a thick skin and realize that if success in sales and the resulting rewards were easy, everyone would be doing it. Ultimately, if you are going to be successful, you've got to put yourself out there and let as many people as possible know about you and what you have to offer.

Meet lots of people

When a politician is out on the campaign trail he or she is laser focused on meeting and talking to as many people as possible. They are not focused on the people they already know and whose vote they have, they are looking to meet strangers and win them over. While they don't snub the people they already know and have in their camp, they spend as little time as possible talking to these people. Their number one objective is meet new people and sell those people on why they should get their vote.

The biggest reason salespeople fail is due to a lack of activity. More specifically, they don't talk to enough people. Yes, sales is a numbers game. While relationships are extremely important, in order to have the number of relationships you need, you have to be talking to tons of people. You need a daily goal for the number of new contacts you're going to make and then, like the politician, you need to be laser focused on hitting that number no matter what.

A friend often reminds me of an extremely successful insurance agent he met once who told him, "What's made me so successful is that every day, Monday through Sunday, I make sure at least three new people know what I do."

Differentiate yourself

Politicians know that if they are going to lay claim to the most powerful office on the planet, they must differentiate themselves from the rest of the crowd. They work on their value statement. They study their competition. They are scripted and they are usually pretty good at knowing how they differ from everyone else in the field. They prepare for the debates by reviewing what questions they are likely to get asked, studying who they are up against, and role-playing comments, answers, and responses.

Similarly as a salesperson you have to know why you, your product, and your company are the better choice. How are you unique? You are the one thing the competition does not have and you have to be able to articulate why it's extremely important that the prospect ends up with *you* versus the competition. You have to know all the differences between you, your product, and your company versus what the competition has to offer. Once you have all the above, you must then script everything and practice it so it comes out of your mouth clearly and confidently.

Commit

I doubt many people would question the commitment of a politician out on the campaign trail. Their rigorous schedule has them visiting many cities, and usually several states, each and every day. They are sleep deprived, void of most luxuries, and endure all the displeasures that come with constant travel. Their pursuit also requires that they place the rest of their lives on hold including family and friends. In order to stay sane and keep up the pace they need to keep up, politicians must be passionate about what they're doing. They must be completely committed and they must be willing to sacrifice all other areas of life in the short-term.

Especially if you are new to sales, an industry, or a company, your life is going to be out of balance in the beginning. There may also be times when the economy, market, or industry take a hit and you have to work extra hours. Sales never has been a 9 to 5 job and it isn't for the faint of heart. You're going to have to commit by making some sacrifices. You also need to know why you're doing what you're doing and why you're passionate about the struggle and eventual reward ahead. Also, if you have a family, you need to make sure everyone is on board. By the way, it's a good idea to get this cleared before you accept the job.

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